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HISTORICAL SKETCH

of

THE WAUGH FAMILY

By MINERVA WAUGH FRENCH
of Wakarusa, Ohio

Read at the Reunion of the Waugh Family at
Wakeman, Ohio, Aug. 11, 1897

"Blood is thicker than Water."

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AT our family reunion a year ago, the work assigned me was, as most of you are aware, to furnish for this occasion a historical sketch of our Waugh ancestry, but I am confronted at the outset with the stubborn fact that I have very meager material to work upon. How intensely interesting to us who are gathered here to-day, if we could but lay hands on some old Record, yellow and worn with age, even though it were, from which we might read the important events in the lives of our ancestry who lived and toiled and struggled with the problems of life 170 years ago. Unfortunately for my purpose, no such Record is forthcoming.

I am unable to find that our name has been inscribed on the scroll of Fame. Our great-forefathers appear to have been men who, for the most part, led a quiet, unobtrusive life, upon whom history fails to shed the glory of National honors. Of them we might truly say:

“Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only *noble* to be *good*;
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.”

So, that if I may not give the rein to fancy and picture to you an ancestry whose lives were illumined with a halo of glory, and gorgeous in the realization of high ambitions, we may all justly pride ourselves in the fact that those men of “ye olden time” in whose veins ran the same blood that pulses in our hearts to-day, were honest, industrious, law-abiding and patriotic citizens of the young Republic. To these humble actors on the stage of life, whose lives were made memorable by generous deeds rather than by ambitious and crafty strife for power, let us give the honor due.

I realize fully that history is nothing, if not correct, and accordingly, I shall furnish you with a sketch which shall be truthful and which can be authenticated by both public and private record. Within the past few months I have corresponded with many people bearing our name, and am astonished to find Waughs everywhere, in nearly every state in the Union, most of whom agree upon one point, i. e., that the family originated in Germany, and that two brothers at an early day, went over from Germany. One settled in England, the other in Ireland. Some of the English Waughs occupied positions of public trust, and there are found in Heraldic books several coats of arms for families of our name. Rev. Waugh, Utica, Northern N. Y. Conference, says that Dr. John Waugh, Pastor of the Presbyterian church, Cohocton, N. Y., traces the family back to Scotch emigrants to Connecticut. James W. Waugh, D.D., for thirty-seven years a missionary to India, has taken great pains to trace his ancestry, and finds, not only in the United States, but also in England, Scotland, Ireland and India, the name of Waugh. In the city directory of Boston were twenty-two of that name. He knew something of Sir Andrew Waugh, forty years ago Surveyor-General of India, of Dr. Alexander Waugh, Minister to London, from Scotland, and he also mentions Miss Ida Waugh of New York City as an artist. Edwin Waugh is also noticed as a poet of considerable gifts.

Albert H. Waugh of Levant, Maine, says the family was of Scotch extraction, and that one Robert Waugh, a Baptist minister, with a band of Christian people, emigrated to this country on account of persecution, having come to Scotland from Ireland.

Thus I could quote page upon page of letters, bearing upon the name of Waugh and pointing to the fact that the family is of Scotch-Irish origin, and it seems more than probable that most, if not all of those that I have mentioned and many more omitted, were the descendants of John Waugh, who as you who listened to my brief report last year, will take note, I have discovered was the father of Alexander Waugh, who last year headed the great procession in the family line.

Miss Jenny Waugh, now a resident of Morris, Connecticut, writes that over one hundred years ago a portion of the town of Litchfield, Connecticut, was called South Farms. Here our first ancestor, whose relationship we can prove, settled, and here many of his children and grandchildren lived and died. In an old cemetery in that place lie buried John and Margaret Waugh, the first of our line that we can trace. An old family record begins with John and states that he came from the north of Ireland. (This John may be a son or a brother of the Rev. Robert Waugh who fled from persecution, though this is only a surmise.) Our ancestor was born in 1687 and died in 1781. The record then states that he had four sons, Robert, Joseph, Thomas and Alexander, the latter born in 1729, *take note*. The record does not state that these four sons were born in Litchfield, although it does give the date of each birth. Miss Jenny Waugh, to whom I referred as furnishing me with the record, believes that the four sons of John were born in Litchfield, while another correspondent, Mrs. Ella Waugh Turner of Scriba, N. Y., a cousin of the Lees, here present, says in a recent letter, that her father, Porter Waugh, had told her that his grandfather Alexander, our great grandfather, one of the four sons of John Waugh, was born in the north of England on the Scottish border. I have no means of deciding which is correct, although it looks reasonable to suppose that if the four sons were born on the Scottish border the fact would have been so recorded, as the birthplace of the father is given. At all events, Alexander, if not born in Litchfield, lived there in his infant years.

In the early history of Litchfield we find that at the commencement of the Revolutionary War in December, 1776, the Legislature appointed a committee to rouse and animate the people and to endeavor to procure a further enlistment of volunteers for Washington's army. A Company was forthwith raised in Litchfield and the following officers were commissioned: Nathaniel Goodwin, Captain; Alexander Waugh, Lieutenant; and later, in March, the following inhabitants of this town were appointed Inspectors of Provisions for the Army, to wit: Capt. Alexander Waugh, etc. These facts, which are fully established by the early records of Litchfield,

I have also from my father, Gideon Waugh, who told me that his paternal grandfather Alexander, and his maternal grandfather Gideon Smedley, fought side by side in the Revolutionary War.

The name of Thomas Waugh, the brother older than Alexander, is often mentioned in this record as being appointed Collector of Provisions for the Army, and to attend to the needs of soldiers' families. Some future historian of our family may establish the fact that Thomas was also a soldier. I here quote from Mrs. Turner's letter, in speaking of her great grandfather Alexander, she continues: "There was a great uncle of my father whose name was Thomas, said by him to have died in the Revolutionary War." Mrs. Turner adds: "I have seen a hat that was on exhibition in 1878 among a collection of Revolutionary War relics at Washington's Headquarters on the Hudson. The hat was a Continental shape, turned up on one side, with a large rosette fastened where the side turned up. The hat bore the name of Thomas Waugh and hung in a glass case with many other souvenirs of the War." Mrs. Turner went to see the hat at the suggestion of her father, Porter Waugh, who told her that Thomas was a relative and that he was promoted for bravery on the field of battle. The act of bravery was the shooting of a Redcoat and was on this wise: Thomas was under the leadership of Gen. Marion and when he saw a soldier taking aim at his General he said: "A man as brave as Marion, who can live on potatoes and salt is too good to be shot by a sneaking Redcoat." The aim was taken at Gen. Marion, but the musket of Thomas Waugh laid the Redcoat low. For this act of bravery Thomas was at once promoted but was killed soon after.

Before passing to the next generation let us return briefly to Litchfield, which was settled in 1718, John Waugh being one of the first settlers. The historical importance of the town ranks high, it having been visited by Washington many times, and Aaron Burr having lived there for many years. It was also the home of Oliver Wolcott, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and a member of the Continental Congress. It was the birthplace and home of Gen.

Ethan Allen, the hero of Ticonderoga, and was often visited by Gen. La Fayette. In a part of Litchfield township was located the Waugh Homestead, which has been in the family since 1718, until quite recent years. The township record shows that Alexander married Elizabeth Throop, Feb. 12, 1766, and that families of her name still live, near what was known for upward of 170 years as the Waugh farm.

In 1767, Dan Waugh, first child of Alexander, was born in Litchfield, also Norman, Freeman, Irene, Rhoda, Elizabeth, and no further mention is made of Alexander, but from record of Dan Waugh preserved by my father, I find that Alexander moved from Litchfield to Camden, Oneida County, N. Y., about A. D., 1800, traveling with horses and wagon. Whether Alexander and all his children came to New York at the same time I do not know. He and his wife are buried at Hamilton, N. Y. Dan Waugh married Irene Smedley in 1794. Their children were Betsey, Gideon, Cynthia, Dan, Clarissy, Alexander, Lansing and Archibald Burnett. About 1811, Dan Waugh with his family removed from Camden to Lewiston, N. Y., where he died Jan. 30, 1812, his wife surviving him only twelve days. The eight children, the oldest only sixteen years old, were left in a new country where wandering tribes of Indians were a constant source of alarm even to stout-hearted men; where the safety of the whites depended on their fleeing to Fort Lewiston for protection, at the approach of the Indians. The home was abandoned, and the family of eight children were taken back to Camden by their kind uncle, Norman Waugh, and they found homes among their relatives.

My father was given a home with his uncle, Mrs. Lucinda Lee's father, and Norman Waugh, who was the second son of Alexander, was the father of Mrs Susan Douglas, Porter and Norman and Lucinda Lee, and by his second marriage, the father of Mrs. Sally Cook and of Freeman Waugh, deceased, late of Denver, Colorado. Norman Waugh died at Scriba, N. Y., in 1821, and was buried on his own farm. One correspondent writes that Norman, as well as his older brother Dan, held many positions of public trust. Norman's descendants live mostly in New York.

The third son of Alexander was Freeman, who moved to Wisconsin at an early day. All that we know of his descendants is that Freeman, the millionaire of Denver, visited his home in Wisconsin after the war and found three brothers, one named Freeman. The three daughters of Alexander cannot be traced, as they married.

Gideon Waugh married Minerva Miner at Scriba, N. Y., 1818, and had six children. From his farm in Scriba he went to Oswego, where he labored as Superintendent of Work upon the Long Pier and also upon the Erie Canal. In April, 1833, he came with his family in a sailing vessel to Ohio. The boat was driven by contrary winds over upon the Canada shore, where they lay for several days. At last they made the Port of Huron, and from there he took his family to Berlin, where he left them while he located his farm. He cut a wagon path in a southeasterly direction from Birmingham, Chapman, only eleven years old, driving the team, and selected his farm in the northwest part of Camden (then Henrietta), being the third man to settle in the town.

In the dense forest they slept at night under the shelter of the wagon box, while the owls gave them a spookish serenade. Chapman was the boy pioneer whose axe helped to fell the "forest primeval" in Camden. Before the little 12 by 12 foot cabin was completed they were joined by two of their old neighbors from Scriba, Lee and Douglas, whom they welcomed with such cordiality as only a pioneer can feel. The family were brought in from Berlin by August 1st, and on the 24th of the same month a son was born, James being the pioneer baby of Camden. The mother soon yielded to the insidious advances of consumption, and died Oct. 2nd, being interred temporarily upon the farm.

My mother, Mindwell Shepard, arrived the following winter from Massachusetts, on a visit to her relatives in Henrietta, and soon assumed the name of Waugh. There is an anecdote that bears upon their marriage license that Burtiss Bayliss used to relate with great glee. He was employed by my father to walk to Elyria through the woods to procure the legal document, and as he set off he enquired of father the name of the lady interested. Now my father had a very poor



memory for names, and scratched his head in vain for some time, and came near having to make a trip to old Deacon Shepard's to ask the name of his affianced bride.

Father was a man endowed with native generosity, was zealous for the educational development of the town, and with two or three neighbors he built the first school-house. Previous to this he had hired a school teacher who had "taught the 'young idea' to shoot" from the loft of his log cabin.

When the town was set off from Henrietta, father suggested the name of Camden, in honor of his early home in Camden, Oneida county, N. Y. He was ready with a willing hand in the laying out and improvement of roads, and in all ways within his power strove to advance the public's good. In the absence of a resident preacher he was often called upon to solemnize the rite of marriage between contracting parties, and great was my joy on such occasions, for I was often allowed to attend the ceremony, accompanying my father. (My mother was a New England woman whose strong conscientious scruples would not permit her to attend a wedding unhallowed by the presence of a Reverend.) At such times we honored the event by borrowing the only pleasure carriage then owned in the township, a double-seated lofty vehicle belonging to Mr. Hovey, the grandfather of one of our guests here to-day. In this rig we used to make our way through swamps and corduroy roads to the south line of Camden, known at that day as Tract 9. The wedding collation was simple in the extreme, and although there was an occasional wild roast turkey to grace the festal board, I recall one wedding where a pumpkin pie only was passed around upon a tin, and another where a pan of cookies was the only edible served.

Father assisted in the organization of the Baptist church in 1834, and though deprived for many years of the privileges of the sanctuary, being afflicted with severe deafness, he was ever solicitous for the prosperity of Zion. His faith in God's providence over all His works was strong, even unto death. He was ever ready with sympathy and counsel for such as were distressed, and during the twenty years that he held the

office of Justice of the Peace, very many disagreements that were brought before him for litigation, were by him happily, though privately adjusted to the satisfaction of the interested parties. He sold his farm in Camden and removed to Wakeman in 1852, and though he suffered pecuniary loss, he was cheerful with the allotment of Providence. He bequeathed not wealth to his family, but what is far better, the legacy of tender memories and a life untarnished by selfish pursuits. He died at Wakeman, May 16, 1869.

In closing this imperfect and fragmentary sketch of our ancestry as they have passed in hasty review before us, let us gather whatever inspiration we may from their lives, and emulate their example in following whatsoever things were lovely and of good report. Let us treasure our common heritage of sacred memories that have descended to us from our patriotic forefathers and let our hearts thrill with a just pride that we are the sons and daughters of that Revolutionary stock that fought for the liberty of our country.

It is fitting that we, "whose feet are now passing down the western slope of life," should recall in brief mention the lives of some of those who have preceded us and whose life work is still fresh in our memory. Let us recall Uncle Dan as he lived among us fifty or sixty years ago, and behold a patient, God-fearing man, whose life, though beset by affliction and sorrow, was an example of Christian faith. The cheerful, hopeful trust in God, the "faith and works" that were exemplified in the every-day life of Uncle Lansing, might well inspire us all with that Divine hope that thrilled his earnest soul. The memory of Mrs. Lucinda Lee calls for our admiration and respect. Her industry and her Christian virtues let us recall, for her life was a model worthy of imitation.

Finally, let us recognize the bond of friendship that holds us, and by gentle hand-clasp and kindly greeting let us advance and impress the sentiment that "Blood is thicker than Water."

